

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 NSC-10 H-03 PM-07 SS-20 SSO-00

NSCE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 INRE-00 DRC-01 /101 W

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2023

INFO USCINCSO

UNCLAS CARACAS 10459

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT VE

SUBJECT: VENEZUELAN ELECTIONS: CSE COPING WITH REGISTRATION
PROBLEMS

REF: A. CARACAS 10454 AND B. 10352

1. IN A NATIONWIDE RADIO AND TELEVISION ADDRESS THE EVENING OF
DECEMBER 7,
PRESIDENT OF THE SUPREME ELECTORAL COUNCIL (CSE) LUIS PIETRI
DECLARED THAT VENEZUELA'S ELECTORAL MACHINERY IS READY FOR THE
DECEMBER 9 ELECTIONS. HE STRESSED THE CSE'S IMPARTIALITY AND CALLED
ON ALL CITIZENS TO UNITE BEHIND THE PRESIDENTIAL WINNER AS PROCLAIMED
BY THE CSE. HE RECALLED THE PLEDGE OF THE ARMED FORCES TO SUPPORT THE
CSE IN ITS DECLARATION OF THE RESULTS (REFTEL B). ALSO ON DEC 7
MINISTER OF DEFENSE GENERAL GUSTAVO PARDI DAVILA ISSUED A BULLETIN
URGING CITIZENS TO VOTE AND PROMISING THAT THE ARMED FORCES WILL
GUARANTEE ORDER DURING THE ELECTIONS AND RESPECT THE RESULTS.

2. EARLIER DURING THE DAY PIETRI HAD EMPHATICALLY DENIED A NEWS REPORT

THAT BECAUSE OF LAST-MINUTE DIFFICULTIES IN ELECTORAL REGISTRATION
PROCEDURES THE CSE WAS CONSIDERING POSTPONING THE ELECTIONS. IN HIS
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EVENING ADDRESS PIETRI SAID THAT THE CSE AND SUBSIDIARY ELECTORAL

BODIES HAD ADOPTED NEW MEASURES TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS OF ELECTION INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION, AND ASKED FOR THE UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION OF THE PUBLIC.

3. DECEMBER 7 AND 8 RADIO, TELEVISION, AND PRESS HAVE GIVEN VERY EXTENSIVE COVERAGE OF NEW CSE DECISIONS, INSTRUCTIONS, AND INFORMATION.

AT THE SAME TIME THE MEDIA HAVE GIVEN HEAVY PUBLICITY TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE SNAFU, BUT WITH SOMEWHAT LESS ALARM ON DECEMBER 8 THAN DECEMBER 7.

4. PIETRI STATED THAT, BARRING UNFORESEEN PROBLEMS, THE CSE WILL HAVE COMPILED 70 PCT OF THE VOTES BY THE EVENING OF DEC 10, AND THE REST BY THE EVENING OF DEC 11, SO THAT THE CSE SHOULD BE ABLE OFFICIALLY TO INFORM THE NATION OF THE ELECTORAL RESULTS ON DEC 11 OR 12.

5. IN CARACAS IT APPEARS THAT THERE HAS BEEN NEARLY UNIVERSAL OBSERVANCE OF THE POST-DECEMBER6 BAN ON CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES AND PROPAGANDA, AND THERE ARE NO REPORTS OF VIOLATIONS IN THE INTERIOR. THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN NO REPORTS OF PUBLIC ORDER DISTURBANCES. THE VENEZUELAN ARMED FORCES HAVE GONE ON THEIR PLANNED ALERT, AND TROOPS HAVE BEEN OBSERVED ON GUARD AT POLLING PLACES THE MORNING OF DEC 8, IN FULFILLMENT OF THEIR PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED RESPONSIBILITIES.

6. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THE LAST-MINUTE REGISTRATION MUDDLE HAS BEEN DISCONCERTING, PROSPECTS REMAIN GOOD FOR A PEACEFUL ELECTION DAY.
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